

Representing

80,000

Australian

Aborigines

The Australian ABO CALL

THE VOICE OF THE ABORIGINES

EDITED BY J. T. PATTEN

We ask for
Education,
Opportunity,
and
Full Citizen
Rights

No. 3.

MONTHLY, 3d.

JUNE, 1938.

Calling all Aborigines Straight Talk

by THE EDITOR.

Will ever the shackles of misery and poverty be lifted from the lowliest section of the community — the Australian Aborigines?

As an Aboriginal in the responsible position of rebroadcasting the voice of the Aborigines themselves, so that the white people of this country will know the true conditions under which the Aborigines of Australia are forced to live, I say, Brothers and Sisters of my race, ask yourselves How have we fared under the whiteman's Administration?

Look at our Reserves! What is it that greets us on investigation? Starvation, poor housing and education, and general oppression. It seems that the "Protection" Board on some reserves appoints men to torture us mentally with bullying tactics.

This, with the wrecking of our physical condition through inadequate food supply, has only one object — Extermination! What have we to lose if this so-called "protection" Board is abolished?

With all the whiteman's organisation and facilities for progress, together with his boast of fairplay and justice, the Aborigines, after 150 years of "Christian Rule", find inhumane conditions existing against us.

We have been content in the past to wait, hoping that the dominant race would become conscious of our plight. But we find that we have been forgotten in their march to nationhood.

So all Aborigines in Australia who want the privileges and benefits of civilisation for the welfare of their wives and children should get behind this movement. Say goodbye to the damper and ashes, and to the compounds! We want to be absorbed into the Nation of Australia, and thus survive in the land of our forefathers, on equal terms.

JOIN THE ASSOCIATION TODAY!

The time has now come for all Aborigines, and persons of Aboriginal blood, to join the Aborigines Progressive Association in the coming fight for Citizen Rights.

Many Aborigines and Halfcastes joined the Australian Army (A.I.F.) in the last war "for freedom".

Hundreds of these have died to uphold the fair name of Australia.

Yet today, Aborigines and Halfcastes, and all persons having "any admixture of Aboriginal blood", are treated as dingoes and as outcasts in the land of their ancestors.

It is to remedy this state of affairs that the Aborigines Progressive Association has been formed.

Throughout Australia, hundreds of Aborigines are joining the Association. Soon we expect to have thousands of members. It is only by strength of numbers that we shall be able to convince White Australians of the justice of our cause.

New Policy.

In adjoining column is a notice convening a meeting to draw up a policy to submit to the Government of New South Wales.

If we can get our reforms in the Mother State of New South Wales, we shall then turn our attention to other States, until Aborigines are liberated in every State of the Commonwealth.

Such is our aim, and we invite every person of Aboriginal blood to join us,

for his own sake, and for the sake of his children.

The Aborigines Progressive Association aims at the repeal of all existing legislation which restricts the freedom of Aborigines.

We demand to be treated as ordinary Australian citizens, and as ordinary human beings.

Ever since Dampier's libel was uttered, in the year 1688, that Australia's Aborigines are "the lowest type on earth", we have been subjected to persecution by missionaries, scientists, and officials.

Extermination.

Our self-respect has been taken away from us, and we have been driven towards extermination.

Now we are making an effort to raise our own status in the community, by demanding full citizen rights, and equal opportunity, with the children of white men, to become modern Australians.

We do not wish to go back to the Stone Age, we want to join in the march to progress and civilisation.

Our people are good learners, if given the chance.

We ask the white people of Australia to give us this chance of proving that no Australians are better Australians than we!

So, all you Aborigines, join the Association without delay, and help to put an end to the cruel system of "protection" which is slowly but surely exterminating our people.



The Aborigines Progressive Association
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, 1938.

Front Row: T. Foster (Treasurer), J. T. Patten (President), W. G. Sherritt (Secretary).
Back Row: R. McKenzie, C. Charters, J. Timbrey, Snr. (Committeemen).
(W. Sims unavoidably absent)

(Notice)

THE ABORIGINES PROGRESSIVE ASSOCIATION.
Head Office: 209a Elizabeth Street, Sydney.

A SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING

will be held at

"THE PALMS" HALL, LA PEROUSE, SYDNEY.

on

Sunday, 26th June, 1938, at 10 a.m.

Business:

RESOLUTION ON POLICY FOR NEW SOUTH WALES

The following RESOLUTION will be submitted by the Executive Committee:

"THAT the following be the Policy of the Aborigines Progressive Association, to place before the Government of New South Wales:

1. Repeal of all existing legislation regarding Aborigines.
2. Enactment of new legislation to provide for:

CITIZEN RIGHTS

Full Citizen Rights for all Aborigines, including the benefit of all social and industrial and education privileges enjoyed by the white community.

LAND SETTLEMENT

Special Land Settlement Plan for Aborigines, whereby Aborigines who desire to take up land shall be assisted to do so, on similar principles to Soldier Settlers or Immigration Schemes.

EDUCATION

Special education Scholarships for children of Aborigines, to enable them to attend Technical Colleges, Agricultural Colleges, and High Schools, for the purpose of receiving occupational training.

ADMISSION TO CIVIL SERVICE.

Admission of an annual quota of young Aborigines to employment in the Civil Service.

ABORIGINAL RESERVES

Retention of the present Aboriginal Reservations as a sanctuary for aged or infirm Aborigines, or for Aborigines who may be unable or unwilling to adapt themselves suddenly to the opportunities and responsibilities of full citizenship.

ADMINISTRATION.

Constitution of an Aborigines Administration Board, to consist of three persons nominated by the Government, namely one expert in education, one expert in health, and one expert in land settlement; together with three Aborigines, to be nominated by the Aborigines Progressive Association; and that all Inspectors under the proposed new Act should be persons of Aboriginal blood.

ALL MEMBERS OF THE ASSOCIATION ARE
URGENTLY REQUESTED TO ATTEND THIS
IMPORTANT SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING.

ADMISSION BY TICKET ONLY

(signed) For and on behalf of

THE ABORIGINES PROGRESSIVE ASSOCIATION.

J. T. PATTEN, President.
W. G. SHERRITT, Secretary.
T. FOSTER, Treasurer.

Committee:
R. MCKENZIE, C. CHARTERS,
J. TIMBREY, Snr. W. SIMS.

19th May, 1938.

Escaped from Queensland!

AMAZING STORY OF A BURST FOR FREEDOM

"The Abo Call" has received a sensational letter from an Aboriginal who has fled across the Queensland border into New South Wales, to escape his tormentors.

For obvious reasons, we cannot publish this fugitive's name, as the Board in New South Wales would have power to return this man to his native State for further persecution, under the slave laws which are called "Protection Acts" that apply to the unfortunate original natives of Australia.

The case is only too genuine, and we publish it to let the white community see the truth about "Democracy" in fair and sunny White Australia.

The Man Who Crossed the Border writes as follows:—

"When I was 14 years of age, my Mother went into Purga Mission, of her own accord, with five girl children and one boy, myself. Purga Mission is run by the Salvation Army, and I was there fifteen years.

"The Army Lassies put one of my sisters on starvation rations, and I made a protest. For this I had to feed on air for a day.

"Then I spoke up again for my sister's rights, and the words I used to the Army Lassie were DAMN AND BLAST YOU!

"For this I was sent as a punishment to Cherbourg Mission, where I put in five years. I would rather put in five years in Boggo Road Jail. None of the blacks there get a fair go.

"My work was to make sanitary tins. I used to knock out 40 tins a month. For that I got a little extra tobacco, butter, and sugar, and at times I had to fight to get that.

"I applied for wages, but could not get any. I asked to be allowed to go off the Mission to get outside work, but could not get a permit. I asked for permission to visit my sisters at Purga, but was refused.

"I then went without a Permit, but I got caught, and was sent back to Cherbourg, where I got summonsed, and was threatened with three months' jail for wanting to see my sisters.

"I can say truly that up in Queensland, the Managers can do what they like with our people. If the darkies want to go out and handle their own money, they never get the opportunity. The white managers can do what they like with the poor blacks. The white people outside have no idea what is going on in these Missions.

"One of my sisters was also sent to Cherbourg, where she died of a broken heart through being separated from the rest of our family. This shows you what a tough place Queensland is on the Mission Stations.

"After her death, I made up my mind to run away and I am here now in New South Wales with my mother; but my four sisters are still on a Queensland Mission. One of them tried to run away from Purga, but she got caught and sent to Woorabinda.

"You can imagine how the Queensland mothers are worried, having their daughters kidnapped by the Government and sent from one place to another, not knowing where they are half the time.

"I hope that the Movement will grow strong on the Queensland side, as well as in New South Wales.

"We are all living in conditions of slavery; and only by working together to join the Association will we be able to wake the conscience of the white community to the terrible sufferings of our people."

Note: "The Abo Call" has other cases on record of children separated from their parents and families. It happens very often in New South Wales, as well as in Queensland. We welcome our brother, and hope he is not caught, but he will find New South Wales no better than Queensland.

EXCITEMENT AT BELLBROOK. Rumour of Removal.

The Aborigines of Bellbrook, Macleay River, New South Wales are in a state of worry and excitement, following a rumour that the A.P. Board intends to move them all, lock, stock, and barrel, to Burnt Bridge, Kempsey.

We hope the A.P. Board will have more sense than to do this moving of our people, like pieces on a draught-board.

There is great dissatisfaction among the Aborigines at their treatment at Bellbrook, and it is thought that this bad treatment is intended to reconcile the Aborigines to the idea of leaving Bellbrook and going to Kempsey.

Several letters from Bellbrook to "The Abo Call" make a strong protest against these tactics of the A.P. Board.

Our people say they do not want to be moved from the district where most of them were born, away to Burnt Bridge to live among strangers.

They are also afraid of the bad water at Kempsey and they know that there is much unemployment at Kempsey, and no chance of getting casual labour there.

One letter says: "If a plague breaks out at Kempsey, we would all be wiped out, while at Bellbrook the ground is high and healthy. Instead of being moved away from our own place, we want conditions to be improved here, on the spot."

To coax the people to Kempsey, it is said that there is plenty of rations there. Our people ask why there are not plenty rations at Bellbrook?

Meetings have been held, and further developments will be watched with great interest by the Aborigines Progressive Association.

"The Abo Call"
AGENTS WANTED
Copies will be supplied to Agents, price 2/6 per dozen.
Send cash with order to
Box 1924 KK,
General Post Office,
Sydney, N.S.W.

ABORIGINES PROGRESSIVE ASSOCIATION

Executive Committee Meetings.

Since the General Meeting of 24th April last, when the Constitution & Rules were adopted and officers elected, the Executive Committee of the Association has held regular weekly meetings, each Thursday evening, to continue organisation of the Association.

Careful Minutes of all meetings are kept, and may be inspected by members.

A Bank Account has been opened with the Commercial Bank of Australia, Limited, 45 Park Street, Sydney, and an Auditor has been appointed, namely Mr. J. H. Titchen, F.C.A. (Aust.), of 33 Macquarie Place, Sydney.

Arrangements have been made for the time being for Head Office accommodation at T. & C. Building, 209a Elizabeth Street, Sydney. Letters to the Association should be sent to this address until further notice.

Stationery has been printed, including letterheads, Membership Application Forms, Members' Tickets, and Book of Constitution & Rules.

Application has been made for registration of the Association under the Charitable Collections Act.

The Association has decided to call a Special General Meeting for 26th June, 1938, to discuss Policy for New South Wales, as reported on page 1, where notice convening the Special General Meeting is printed.

Having attended to all formalities necessary for the proper establishing of the Association, the Executive Committee are now engaged in a recruiting drive for a large membership.

Organising trips to country centres will be undertaken in June. It has been decided that no approach will be made to the white community for donations until such time as the Aborigines themselves have shown full support by joining the Association as paid-up members.

After the Special General Meeting of 26th June, it is proposed to launch a petition to Parliament, asking for the policy of the Aborigines Progressive Association to be put into effect.

Activities of W. Ferguson

Executive Committee Resolutions.

Following the General Meeting of 17th and 24th April last, several reports appeared in the "whitemen's" newspapers that W. Ferguson claimed to be "President of the Aborigines Progressive Association".

Reports also appeared of Ferguson addressing whitemen's meetings, claiming to be the "President" of the Association, and, on 2nd May, several Aborigines received by post a "roneo'd" circular, calling a meeting of "The Aborigines Progressive Association", to be held at Dubbo on 30th June. This circular was signed "W. Ferguson, President", although Ferguson is not an officer of The Aborigines Progressive Association.

The Executive Committee therefore decided to take steps to restrain this individual from improperly using the name of the Association, for the collection of funds or otherwise, as it is necessary to protect the white community as well as the Aborigines from irresponsible activities of this type.

The so-called "General Meeting" at Dubbo, if held, will not be a meeting of the Aborigines Progressive Association, and will be bogus if called or held in the name of the Association.

The following Resolutions regarding W. Ferguson were carried unanimously at the Executive Committee Meeting of the Aborigines Progressive Association, held at the Secretary's residence, La Perouse, on 5th May:

(1) "THAT the Executive Committee of the Aborigines Progressive Association, duly established and elected according to law, hereby declares that the advertised meeting of Aborigines, convened in the name of W. Ferguson, by circular dated 2nd May, to be held at the Public Hall, Dubbo, on 30th June next, is not a meeting of the Aborigines Progressive Association, and is not convened in accordance with the Constitution & Rules of the Association. Furthermore, that W. Ferguson, not being an officer of the Association, is not entitled to use the name of the Association in convening any meeting of Aborigines, and is not entitled to speak in the name of the Aborigines Progressive Association on any matter. This Executive further declares that the disruptive tactics of W. Ferguson are damaging to the Aborigines of Australia in their difficult fight for freedom, and declares that W. Ferguson, as a person who in the past has utilized Aborigines by organising showground corroborees, is not a fit and proper person to speak in the name of the Aborigines of Australia on a serious political question."

(2) "THAT copies of the foregoing resolution be sent to the press, to the Registrar of Charitable Collections, and to W. Ferguson, and to the Secretary of the Public Hall at Dubbo, and that Ferguson be warned in writing that legal action will be taken against him if he collects money or otherwise acts in the name of the Aborigines Progressive Association."

WHITE MEN TRESPASSING

A Letter from James Yarry Campbell.

Walcha, N.S.W.

Our complaint here is that the A.P. Board allows white men to run sheep, cattle, and horses, on the Aboriginal Reserve, and they eat all the feed, so we can't keep horses for our children to ride to school. The fences around the reserve are cut and are falling down.

Some of us tried to grow vegetables, corn, potatoes by the river-side, but the white people cut down the fences and let their stock in to trample down and eat what we planted with so much labour. All our work is gone for nothing.

Note: The Aborigines Progressive Association advocates farm settlement for Aborigines, as our people are keen farmers, when given the chance. Most of the present Reserves are on poor land, just what the whites don't want for themselves, and badly watered. On top of this, as the above letter shows, white people are allowed to trespass on the Reserves which are supposed to be sanctuaries for Aborigines.—Editor.

"THE ABO CALL"

Difficulties Overcome.

The interest of the Government in the activities of the Aborigines Progressive Association was well demonstrated when the President was honoured by a visit of inspection from two senior officers of the Police Department, who carefully investigated the Constitution & Rules and Minute Book of the Association. The visit was of two hours duration, and, as everything was in order, there is nothing more to report.

Two days later (12th May), J. T. Patten, as publisher of "The Abo Call", received a letter from the Registrar-General, calling upon him to enter into recognizances, as required by the Newspapers Act, 1898, the amount of the recognizances being £300, together with two or three sureties for like amount.

This was almost a knock-out blow for "The Abo Call", and shows that, under our existing Australian press laws, since the year 1898, the poor man has no hope of starting a newspaper or practising "freedom of the press". The Aborigines of Australia certainly are unable to put up £300 recognizance for a newspaper.

However, thanks to some good friends, arrangements have been made to continue publication of "The Abo Call".

The necessary recognizances have been entered into by The Publicist Publishing Company, of 209a Elizabeth Street, Sydney, who are publishers of "The Publicist", a monthly paper that is "loyal to Australia First". This firm also published "Capricornia", the great novel of Aborigines and Halfcastes in North Australia. "The Publicist" considers that no question can be more Australian than the Aboriginal Question, and so supports our cause.

Before making final arrangements, Mr. W. J. Miles and Mr. P. R. Stephenson, of "The Publicist", had a conference with the Executive Committee of the Aborigines Progressive Association, when the following statement was read by Mr. Miles:

STATEMENT BY "THE PUBLICIST"

At La Perouse, Sydney, Thursday night, 19th May, 1938.

"The Australian Aborigines, as defined by the law of New South Wales, if they desire improvement of their conditions, should make effort for themselves. The Aborigines of La Perouse are the best located to make effort for all the Aborigines in New South Wales, and also for all the Aborigines in Australia; but, as they are the best conditioned, the Aborigines of La Perouse may be too contented, too unimaginative, too lacking in ambition, and in desire for improvement, to take advantage of the present, or any future, opportunity for furthering the particular interest of the Aborigines generally: in spite of their having children and grand-children, they may have no positive desire for survival, but may unconsciously desire extermination (which "white" Australians expect and desire for them).

"The Publicist does not believe that the Aborigines are certain to be exterminated, but it does believe that, if the Aborigines themselves make no concerted effort to improve their conditions, and are without desire for survival, then extermination would be their logical end.

"If the Aborigines trust 'White' Australians to better the Aborigines conditions, through spontaneous impulse, that trust would reveal a mere supineness that would logically lead to extermination.

"If the Aborigines were to make effort to help themselves towards better conditions, 'The Publicist' would give them what help it could, without making obligatory or any claim."

In accordance with the foregoing conditions, the Publicist Publishing Company has now lodged the necessary recognizances and has assumed responsibility for publishing "The Abo Call", until such time as the Aborigines themselves may be able to provide the recognizances and make other arrangements for publication.

The paper will continue to be edited by J. T. Patten, and will be "The Voice of the Aborigines", expressing the point of view of the Aborigines themselves.

The Massacres at Bathurst

AS RELATED BY HON. W. H. SUTTOR, M.L.C.

NOTE: As soon as the road across the Blue Mountains was discovered, there was a "rush" to take up land on the Western Plains. One of the pioneers was George Suttor, a farmer of Baulkham Hills, Parramatta, who, in the year 1822 took 400 sheep and a few cattle and settled at Brucedale, on the Winburndale Creek, near Bathurst. With the aid of his son, he extended his holding to 10,000 acres, and his flocks roamed far afield, towards Mudgee and down the Macquarie and Lachlan rivers.

A grandson of the original George Suttor was WILLIAM HENRY SUTTOR, born at Bathurst in the year 1834, who later became the "squatter" of Alloway Bank station.

W. H. Suttor was very well-known in public life, being a member of parliament, and at different times Minister for Mines, Justice, Education, and Post Office. At the time of his death, in 1915, Mr. Suttor was President of the Legislative Council. He must be considered "a reliable witness."

He was the author of a book, published at Bathurst in the year 1877, entitled "Australian Stories Re-told, and Sketches of Country Life."

It is from this book that we make the following extracts, regarding the massacre of Aborigines in the Bathurst District.

POISONED DAMPER.

In February, 1822, a few hundred breeding ewes, some horned cattle, one mare named "Sally," a loaded bullock dray, and some convict servants, under the direction principally of the young lad, started on their arduous journey over the Blue Mountains. Some sixteen days were occupied in the passage of the hills, over which the railway now passes in half as many hours.

Bathurst Plains at length reached, our settlers located themselves on the western edge of the open land, built the necessary huts and yards, and patiently awaited the arrival of the surveyor to define their boundaries.

The blacks were troublesome at Bathurst in those days — the cause, very frequently, was their ill-treatment by the whites.

Poisoned dampers had been left purposely exposed in shepherd's huts in order to tempt the blacks to steal and eat. They did eat, and died in horrible agony. No wonder reprisals took place.

Our hut was one day surrounded by a large party of blacks, fully equipped for war, under the leadership of their great fierce chief and warrior, named by the whites "Saturday".

There were no means of resistance, so my father, then a lad of eighteen years, and alone on the premises, met them fearlessly at the door. He spoke to them in their own language, in such a manner as not to let them suppose he anticipated any evil from them. They stood there, sullen, silent, motionless. My father's cheerful courage and friendly tone disarmed animosity.

They consult in an undertone, and depart as suddenly and as noiselessly as they came. The next thing known of them is, that they killed (was it not just retribution?) all the men at a settler's place some miles distant — the very place where, it was rumoured, the poisoned bread had been laid for them. This place is called the "Murdering Hut" to this day.

After all this business, with that peculiar sense of justice which has not rendered our dealings with the inferior races a source of much congratulation, the extermination of the tribe was decreed, and almost completely carried out.

They never molested either man or beast of my father's. He had proved himself their friend on previous occasions, but if at this time he had shown distrust or hostility, they certainly would have killed him.

MARTIAL LAW.

If one travels some sixteen miles to the north-west from the city of Bathurst, he will, after passing over some steep granite-crowned ranges of hills, drop in long descent into a series of small, pretty valleys.

Embosomed in the hills and encircled

by high, rocky ranges, the place is secluded and very romantic-looking. On a sloping knoll stands an old stone-walled cottage.

At time of the commencement of our story in 1824 a considerable area of the land about these valleys had been granted to an emigrant gentleman from the old land. Peaceful and quiet as the spot is at the time of our present writing, it has been the scene of a dastardly massacre.

In the year above mentioned, a foreigner named Antonio had cultivated a patch of land on the Macquarie River, opposite the town of Bathurst. Among other things he grew potatoes.

One day, as a large number of the black tribe of the place came by, Antonio, moved by a spirit of good nature, gave some of his tubers to these people. Next day, they having appreciated the gift, appeared at the potato patch and commenced to help themselves.

This was not to Antonio's liking, who roused the people of the settlement on his behalf. They rushed down and attacked the blacks, some of whom were killed and others maimed.

After this, the blacks commenced general depredations, killing solitary shepherds, destroying large numbers of sheep, and they actually got possession of seven stand of arms and some ammunition.

In the course of a short time, hostile contests having taken place, several aborigines, as well as Europeans, were killed.

To put a stop to these proceedings, martial law was proclaimed through all the country lying west of Mount York. Under this condition of things the blacks were shot down without any respect.

Getting the worst of it, most of them made out into the deep dells of the Capertee country, and, although some escaped, many were killed there.

At the place we are writing of a camp of blacks had been established. The proclamation of martial law was as undecipherable to them as Egyptian hieroglyph. This mattered little to the whites — the fiat had gone forth and must be acted upon. So a party of soldiers was despatched to deal with those at this camp.

Negotiations, apparently friendly, but really treacherous, were entered into. Food was prepared, and was placed on the ground within musket range of the station buildings. The blacks were invited to come for it.

Unsuspectingly they did come, principally women and children. As they gathered up the white men's presents they were shot down by a brutal volley, without regard to age or sex.

The great black leader of the day, named Windradyne, alias Saturday, was so offensive that 500 acres of land were offered for his capture. Saturday lived

through this martial law business, and was afterwards killed by one of his own countrymen in a duel. He is said to have been a really fine specimen of the manly savage.

For some time before his death he lived in peace with the whites, and stories are told of his goodnatured and affectionate conduct towards the children of his former foes.

When martial law had run its course, extermination is the word that most aptly describes the result.

As the old Romans said, "They made a solitude and called it peace." The last effort of a doomed race was thus ended.

ON THE LACHLAN.

The river, swollen by the winter rains, ran sluggishly by, close under the hut. At a few yards distant is the blacks' camp, as several of them are employed to help with the cattle. They get new suits of clothes occasionally, blankets, tobacco, and as much as they can consume of bread and beef and tea. When meals are on they come to the door, and their share is cut off for them by the hutkeeper.

The camp is a merry place, and notwithstanding its uncomfortable squalor, cheerfulness and silvery laughter reign supreme. The gentle, good-natured Boney is there, with soft hands, tapering fingers, and filbert nails, which, if white, were shapely enough to be the envy of the most refined of drawing-room "dandies"; and Jackey Beecham, a thin, wiry lad, with a prematurely old face, whom no horse could throw. He seems, when at full gallop, to ride his steed all over like a monkey. Alban also is there, a young man from the wild tribes, just learning to say a few words of English, and discovering that clothes and food and a horse to ride are preferable to the life nature has provided for him. Poor fellow! He was to copy the vices of the whites, and years after kill his mate in a drunken row, and learnt what prison life meant.

There are several blacks there with their wives. The most notable among the ladies is Maria, alias "The Soldier", Jackey's mother. She had her masculine nickname from her majestic walk, and tall, upright figure. A Roman empress, full of the pride of royal beauty and of imperial power, could not have moved with a more graceful and dignified freedom.

She could swim like a duck, too, and once in time of high flood had saved the life of a young gentleman whom she saw upset from a canoe in mid-stream and like to drown.

She dropped her opossum's fur cloak — her only garment — from her shoulders, and posing on the bank for a moment, a splendid, nude, and breathing bronze, she plunged into the water, and, swimming out to him, seized the half-drowned lad, and landed him all gasping, but alive, on the grass at his father's feet.

Wet and glistening, she donned her cloak, and wringing with her hands her dripping hair, squeezed the water from it, with much shouting of "Yuccai!" ("Oh Dear!") and breathlessness and cheery laughter.

Poor daughter of the plains! With natural instincts for her only rule, she risked her life to save that of a fellow mortal. An act so sublime, and performed without any sense of dutiful guidance, but from an innate feeling of unselfish helpful pity, put her at once on a level superior to most.

The very last time I saw her, worn down with disease, the fruits of her environment, she was nursing, with placid endurance, and tending as best she could under sheets of propped-up bark, a poor aged sisiter, blind and helpless, and slowly dying miserably, with much querulousness and peevish groaning.

FISHOOK IMPRISONED

When Governor Sir Charles Fitzroy came to visit Bathurst in 1847, one of the public institutions he inspected was

the gaol. In it was a prisoner, a black-fellow from the Bogan, who was supposed to have committed some depredation there. He could speak little or no English, and was altogether wild and savage. There was no interpreter at the trial, so that the whole proceeding was mere dumb show to him. He belonged to the Wongaibun (Redant) tribe. He called himself Peeshoo, a name altered by the whites to Fishhook.

My father (who was then a member of the first elected Council for a large country district and the Governor's host) begged for liberty for Fishhook, and promised to take care of him.

The governor inquired into the case, and as there were grave doubts as to the guilt of the prisoner, the evidence of identity (strange to say, often the weakest evidence) being not at all strong, he was liberated.

A policeman brought him to my father's place. Poor fellow! He was let out of gaol just in time to save his reason. Like some wild animal, he was too old and much too settled in savage habits to understand the confinement and discipline and to him the horrible solitude of the prison. It was a restraint and mode of life that his imagination could not have had the remotest conception of.

It was no wonder, then, that when he came to us his reason was tottering. A little longer in confinement, and he must have become a raving maniac.

He was always believed by his new master to have been perfectly innocent of the crime laid to his charge.

He was clothed and fed, but for a considerable time little could be made of him. He was apparently full of revenge for the wrongs done to him.

He used to take his stand on the brow of a hill, and shout and gesticulate and throw imaginary weapons, and spit in the direction of his gaolers for hours every day. Now and again he would throw off all his clothes, and at such times he was altogether a fearful and terrific object, and would take no notice of any people belonging to his new home, but would walk rapidly past them with light springing step, his hands clenched, and muttering incoherently.

However, time, liberty and kindness worked wonders, and when he grew calmer and more rational, he became very useful. He lived with us for some fifteen years until he died.

THE PEOPLE OF THE PLAINS.

These people who fill my early memories of the "Great Plain" with kindest recollections are nearly all gone. A mound of earth here and there slowly and surely sinking to the common level, with adjacent trees scarred over with deep-cut markings, rude armorial bearings, are all that will remain to remind us that they ever were.

It has been the fashion to decry them as being the most degraded. When we consider the natural meagreness of their surroundings, that life with them was a continual struggle; every meal had to be hunted for; that, except the dog, there were no animals to domesticate, no natural plants capable of cultivation to supply a store of food, and, added to these, a climate so genial as to call for little exercise of ingenuity, it need not surprise us that they were not more advanced.

In character they were very human. They were never vulgarly intrusive. I never knew one to be purposely offensive in manner. Civility towards them always ensured respect from them.

They were splendid mimics. I have seen them, in their corroborees, act the part of white men having peculiarities, to the very life.

They had a large fund of common sense, and seldom said or did foolish or silly things. I have seen them exhibit great love and affection for each other.

So far as crime and immorality are concerned, with the revelations of our own courts before us I doubt if we are justified in throwing any stones at this unfortunate race, to whom we have given more vices than virtues.

CAPRICORNIA

EXTRACT FROM COMMONWEALTH PRIZE NOVEL.

THE END OF THREE TRIBES.

Once again "The Abo Call" has the privilege of printing a portion of *CAPRICORNIA*, by Xavier Herbert, the novel which won the Commonwealth Prize of £250 for the "best Australian novel" at Australia's 150th Anniversary.

This novel deals with North Australia, and is published at The Publicist Bookshop, 209a Elizabeth Street, Sydney (price 6/-).

The following three extracts are taken from the first chapter of *CAPRICORNIA*, and refer to incidents of pioneering, showing how the Aborigines looked upon the coming of the whitemen...

I.—SETTLEMENT OF NEW WESTMINSTER (End of the Karrapillua Tribe)

The first white settlement in Capricornia was that of Treachery Bay — afterwards called New Westminster — which was set up on what was perhaps the most fertile and pleasant part of the coast and on the bones of half the Karrapillua Tribe. It was the resentment of the Karrapilluas to what probably seemed to them an inexcusable intrusion that was responsible for the choice of the name of Treachery Bay. After having been driven off several times with firearms, the Tribe came up smiling, to all appearances unarmed and intending to surrender, but dragging their spears, along the ground with their toes. The result of this strategy was havoc. The Karrapilluas were practically exterminated by uncomprehending neighbours into whose domains they were driven. The tribes lived in strict isolation that was rarely broken except in the cause of war. Primitive people that they were, they regarded their territorial rights as sacred.

II.—SETTLEMENT OF PORT ZODIAC. (End of the Larrapuna Tribe)

The site of Port Zodiac was a Corroboree Ground of the Larrapuna Tribe, who left the bones of most of their number to manure it. They called it Mailunga, or the Birth Place, believing it to be a sort of Garden of Eden and apparently revering it. The war they waged to retain possession of this barren spot was perhaps the most desperate that whitemen ever had to engage in with an Australian tribe. Although utterly routed in the first encounter, they continued to harass the pioneers for months, exercising cunning that increased with their desperation. Then someone, discovering that they were hard-put for food since the warring had scared the game from their domains, conceived the idea of making friends with them and giving them several bags of flour spiced with arsenic. Nature is cruel. When dingoes come to a waterhole, the ancient kangaroos, not having teeth or ferocity sharp enough to defend their heritage, must relinquish it or die.

III.—SETTLEMENT OF FLYING FOX ISLAND. (End of the Yurracumbunga Tribe.)

That part of the coast called Yurracumbunga by the Aborigines, which lay about 150 miles to the east of Port Zodiac, was first visited by a whiteman in the year 1885. By that time the inhabitants, having only heard tell of the invaders from survivors of the neighbouring tribe of Karrapilluas, were come to regard whitemen as creatures of legend, or perhaps more rightly as monsters of legend, since they had heard enough about them to fear them greatly. When one of the monsters, in the shape of Captain Edward Krater, a trepang-fisher, suddenly materialised for them, they thought he was a devil come from the sun, because they first saw him in the ruddy light of dawn and he was caroty. Krater was a man of fine physique, and not quietly caroty as a man might be in these days of clean-shaved faces and close-clipped heads, but blazingly, that being a period when manliness was expressed with hair. When the Yurracumbungas discovered that he was mortal, they dubbed him Munichillu, or The Man of Fire.

Ned Krater wished to establish a base for his trepang-fishing on a certain little island belonging to the Yurracumbungas and called by them Arrikitarrayah, or the Gift of the Sea. This island lay with-

in rifle-shot of the mainland and was well watered and wooded and stocked with game and sheltered from the roll of the ocean by the Tikkalalla Islands, which lay in an extensive group along the northern horizon. The tribe used the island at certain times as a Corroboree Ground. Krater had already visited it before he came into contact with the owners. They first saw him when, waking one morning from heavy sleep following a wild night of corroboree, they found his lugger drifting up the salt-water creek on which they were camped. He was standing on the deck in all his golden glory. They snatched up their arms and flew to cover. One of Krater's crew, who were natives of the Tikkalalla Islands and old enemies of the Yurracumbungas, told the ambushade at the top of his voice who Krater was and what would happen if it was with hostile intent that they hid, then took up a rifle and with a volley of shots set the echoes ringing and the cockatoos yelling and the hearts of the Yurracumbungas quaking. Krater then went ashore. After spending some hours sneaking about and peeping and listening to and occasionally answering the assurances shouted from time to time by Krater's men, the Tribe came back shyly to their gunyahs, among which the Man of Fire had pitched a tent.

Thenceforth till a misunderstanding arose, the Yurracumbungas stayed in the camp, staring at Krater and his strange possessions, and learning from his men all they could tell about whitemen, who were, it seemed, not mere raiders like the brownmen who used sometimes to come to them from the north, but supermen who had come to stay and rule. And they learnt a little about shooting with rifles and catching fish with nets and dynamite and making fires by magic, and came to understand why witnessing such things had disorganised and demoralised the vanquished tribes of whom the islanders spoke. As the islanders said — How could one ever boast again of prowess with spear and kylie after having seen what could be done with rifle and dynamite? Far from hating the invader, the Yurracumbungas welcomed him, thinking that he would become one of them and teach them his magic arts.

The tribes of the locality were divided into family sections, or hordes. When a man or men of one horde visited another, it was the custom to allow them temporary use of such of the womenfolk as they were entitled to call Wife by their system of marriage. Because they regarded Krater as a guest and a qualified person, the Yurracumbungas did not mind his asking for the comeliest of their lubras, though they did not offer him one, perhaps because they thought him above wanting one. But they objected strongly when his black crew asked for the same privilege. The islanders were definitely unqualified according to the laws. The granting of such a privilege to them would mean a violation of the traditions, the weakening of their system, the demoralisation of their youth. Thus the Yurracumbungas argued. The islanders said that the old order had passed; and to prove it, one of them seized a lubra and ravaged her. The violent quarrel that resulted was settled by Krater, who hurled himself into the mob, bellowing and firing his revolver. Then Krater ordered the Yurracumbungas to give his men what they wanted.

The Yurracumbungas were struck dumb, appalled by their impotence. Night fell. They sat by their fires, staring at Krater and his men. They stared long after Krater had retired to his tent, long after they had relaxed to their own mattresses of bark. Hours passed. All of

Krater's men, except two who dozed over rifles before the tent, fell asleep, gorged on a great meal of fish.

The headman of the horde was Kurrinua. He had argued fiercely against violation of the laws. He was a man as big and hairy as Krater. In the middle of the night he nudged the man next to him and whispered. His neighbour passed the whisper on. Before long the whole camp knew of his intention. No-one stirred till the tip of the old moon appeared above the bush and splashed the inky creek with silver. Then the man next Kurrinua crawled without a sound across the clearing to the scrub.

A tiny casuarina nut, shot out of the scrub, struck one of the dozing guards and roused him. He looked about. The camp was silent but for snores and the sigh of the wind in the trees. Then a slight sound in the scrub drew the guard's attention. He listened intently. Again he heard it. Tiny crackling as of a foot treading stealthily on leaves. He rose, and with the movement roused his mate, who whispered. Both listened, heard a peculiar pattering sound, and went rifle in hand, with backs turned to the camp, to investigate. Louder crackling. Kurrinua and young Impalui rose with stones in hands and sped towards the guards like shadows. The guards were knocked senseless without a sound. The horde rose to knees, women and children and ancients ready to fly, warriors in arms. Kurrinua and Impalui snatched up the rifles, crept to the tent. Kurrinua was crouching at the flap of the tent with rifle raised when — BANG! — a bullet tore through his body, through the tent, crashed into the fire. Impalui had fired accidentally. Kurrinua fell into the tent.

Uproar! Spears whizzed. Rifles crashed. Men roared and howled. The horde rushed, fought fiercely for a moment, wavered, turned and fled. A few of the islanders rushed to the tent, which was collapsed and sprawling about like a landed devil-fish. They pounced on it and dragged it clear of the men beneath, dragged Kurrinua free of Krater's grip.

Kurrinua rolled over and over like a sea-urchin in a gale, got free of clutching hands and kicking feet, rose, and with blood spurting from his back and belly, plunged into the scrub, followed by a hail of bullets. His pursuers lost him. They spread, passed within a yard of where he lay with thigh-bone snapped by a bullet. He crawled towards the isthmus that lay between the creek and the sea, bent on reaching the canoes. He heard cries and shots as other fugitives were found. He was in sand hillocks out of the shelter of the scrub when the hunters, now carrying torches, rushed on to the beach. He rolled into a hollow and buried himself to the neck.

The night passed, slowly for the hunters, all too swiftly for the hunted. No hope now of escaping by canoe. The hunters had dragged the vessels high. But Kurrinua might swim if he could not walk, swim by way of the sea to the passage and the mainland. Surely he had less to fear from crocodiles than from Munichillu and his men. Still he dared not leave the hollow while the hunters prowled the beach, because they would find the wide track of his crawling before he could reach the creek. They splashed along the water's edge, crashed through the scrub, crept among the hillocks, never went far away.

The dark creek silvered. The hunters' torches paled. Birds stirred in the bush. A Jabiroo flew in from the sea on great creaking wings, swerved with a swish and a croak at sight of the hunters. Jabiroos were gathering at the Ya-impitulli Billabong for the nesting. The Nesting of the Storks. It was the time of the great Corroboree of the Circumcision, for which the men of Yurracumbunga were gathering.

Swiftly the sky lost its stars and the scrub found individuality. Footsteps. A shout when they found the blood and tracks of crawling. Footsteps pattering. Kurrinua looked his last at the gilded skyline. Another shout. They danced around him, pointing, kicking sand in his eyes. Soon Munichillu came, and with him the light of day, as though that too belonged to the like of him. At his appearance the east flamed suddenly, so that the sand was gilded and fire flashed in

his beard. He looked at the face in the sand, grunted, raised his revolver.

Kurrinua's heart beat painfully. His eyes grew hot. The pain of his wounds, which he had kept in check for hours by the power he was bred to use, began to throb. But he did not move a hair. He had been trained to look upon death fearlessly. To do so was to prove oneself a warrior worthy of having lived. His mind sang the Death Corroboree — ee-yah, ee-yah, ee-tullyai — O mungallinni — ee-tukkawunni —

BANG! Kurrinua gasped, heaved out of the sand, writhed, shuddered, died. Ned Krater spat. In his opinion he had done no wrong. He did not know why the savages had attacked him. He thought only of their treachery, which to such as he was intolerable as it was natural to such as they.

"THE ABO CALL" IN QUEENSLAND A Letter from Tom Simpson

Tingoora.
"The Abo Call" is doing wonders for us, and your message is spreading like wildfire round here. I am a Halfcaste, born on Barambah Cattle Station. My father was a Scotsman, and my mother a full-blood. I have seven children. One of my daughters is married to a white man, and has two children. My sons and daughters have good education, and will be a great help in the work which is ahead of Aborigines, to better conditions.

I follow up timber work, such as squaring and yard building and scrub falling, and other axe work. I have had a farm and was a farmer for fifteen years. I was a member of the Queensland Primary Producers Association. I have also had a mail contract.

This is to show that Aborigines are able to become good and useful citizens, if given the chance. I wish to join the Association, and will wake up plenty others to do the same; also please send me six copies of "Abo Call" every month. The reason is that I wish my children and grand-children to have a proper chance in life. Aborigines in the Burnett District are right behind you in this great movement.

TOM SIMPSON.

A LETTER FROM CLIVE MARTIN

Stradbroke Island.
I was on a trip to Cherbourg Station on Barambah Creek, and saw "The Abo Call", which I read with great interest. Please send copies to me at Stradbroke Island, as a lot of our people have good education, and want to know all about this great movement.

I will guarantee that you will get all the support you want from this part of the Commonwealth to uplift our younger generation. Conditions here are not too bad, and our children get schooling, but what about our brothers and sisters on those mission stations? It is a disgrace to the Aborigines Protection Board, which we are trying to abolish.

At Cherbourg there is a great deal of favouritism, as the managers favour some, while others have to do without. The teaching is not of good standard. The food issue is very poor. Hundreds of thousands of pounds are held by the Government of Queensland, the earnings of Aborigines, yet our people cannot get decent food and conditions. On Cherbourg the money is spent on building churches and other buildings faster than the population is breeding.

We want proper education for our younger generation. The poor little children at present have not enough food, so they cannot stand up to the strain of school hours with empty bellies. They cannot develop their little minds properly when they are half-starved.

A big enquiry is needed in Queensland into the administration of the A.P. Board, same as in New South Wales. We can prove all our charges, and ask for a Royal Commission to visit Barambah and other Missions, to take evidence from the people themselves, without being bullied by managers.

Please make me a Member, also send "Abo Call" each month, as all Aborigines here are eager to know more about this great move for progress.

Your sincere friend,
CLIVE MARTIN.